

## **5330, MSD Lawrence Township**

### **PROJECT ABSTRACT**

Lawrence Township has three major district initiatives: Equity for all Students, Response to Instruction, and the Project Approach. The focus for this grant will be the acquisition of additional COWS (Computers on Wheels), which will be used to support our Project Based Learning initiative. The COWS will also be used to pilot online ISTEP test taking. We agree with Harvey Daniels who states that “Technology can leverage some of our very best teaching if we use it wisely.”

The Project Approach, which emphasizes real world experience and positions students as inquirers, information gatherers, and meaning makers, sets up prime opportunities to integrate technology with best practice. Presented with the task of asking questions, seeking answers, and solving problems, students can turn to any number of technologies as they progress through the project process. Some of these technologies enable students to pursue fact-finding and information-gathering; others connect them with people and organizations both close and far from home; and still others allow them to synthesize and present their findings in an appropriate and creative form. In all of these instances, students will use technology for authentic purposes in ways that mirror many present-day workplaces.

Students will also use technology to visually document their learning, discoveries, and progress over time. We believe that technology-enabled project learning is the best form of classroom instruction. Learning through projects while equipped with technology tools allow students to be intellectually challenged while providing them with a realistic snapshot of what the modern workplace looks like. Through projects, students acquire and refine their analysis and problem-solving skills as they work individually and collaboratively to find, process, synthesis, and share information.

As suggested by the Indiana Department of Education, the core academic standards help teachers prioritize instruction and connect the big ideas students need to know in order to advance. The Project Approach serves these state objectives well at each grade level. The technology that students have access to is age-appropriate, as described in their school’s School Improvement and Technology Plans.

Each school involved in the enhancement of this initiative will begin with a baseline of summative assessment ISTEP and Acuity scores prior to implementation of the Project Approach and will be monitoring for expected changes regularly.

A plan for professional development has been outlined and will begin in the summer of 2010, targeting elementary teachers. District Technology and Project Coaches will oversee teacher training.

### **NEEDS/BASELINE**

The demographics of Lawrence Township have changed considerably over the last 10 years. We are proud of the diversity these changes have brought to our district, however, meeting the needs of our community of learners, including the 45% on free/reduced lunch, can be challenging. Since our district has already attained measurable success using the Project Approach, providing additional, technological

support for this initiative could enhance authentic learning for all MSDLT students, leveling the playing field.

## **GOALS/OBJECTIVES**

The primary focus of this grant is to engage students in learning through the Project Approach by building the capacity of all of our students both intellectually and digitally. Through this approach, students become engaged in relevant, real world projects utilizing technology to support the learning and address academic standards. Our goals are to:

- ¿ Increase number of students using COWS to research their Projects;
- ¿ Increase number of student projects that are published/printed/posted online, including using Haiku eportfolios to archive student Projects;
- ¿ Introduce teachers to DOE Learning Connection, which will be used to track student achievement and help target student academic need when planning Projects. Teachers will also be able to collaborate with partner schools and share project ideas;
- ¿ Support literacy instruction by increasing the amount of student-created online eBooks using the BigUniverse.com, provide experiences for online student collaboration with partner school
- ¿ Give students more opportunities to practice test taking online in preparation for online ISTEP.

## **METHODS/ACTIVITIES**

Best practice in education calls for the integration of technology not as an end in itself but as a tool for achieving authentic, collaborative experiences, starting with the interests and natural curiosity of the student. Examples include: asking questions, researching, experimenting, collecting data electronically, analyzing and synthesizing data using spreadsheets and databases, creating and editing digital pictures and video, publishing and presenting information, communicating and connecting world-wide through the Web. The uses of these technologies occur in context, providing an authentic reason and incentive for their use.

Technology and the Project Approach work hand-in-hand, with a wide range of technologies enhancing the core goals of project work, including critical thinking, problem-solving, creative collaboration, and real-world connections.

Through the support of this grant, the district plans to provide additional COWS (Computers on Wheels) for our K-5 students to research, collaborate, document, publish, and post their findings.

The following activities will lead to successful implementation of our goals and objectives:

1. Elementary teachers will collaborate with Partner School Teachers, Media Specialists, and Instructional Technology and Project coaches to determine best practices for integrating the technology with project-based curriculum.

2. Teachers will review and analyze data from the datawarehouse to refine instruction incorporating technology.
3. Teachers will explore new examples of ¿project-based learning¿ activities and implement new projects in their classroom using the technology tools available from this grant funding
4. Students will create and present final products from these activities, post to their eportfolio, and reflect on their personal growth.
5. Teachers will administer ISTEP+ and analyze and disaggregate 2010 data to compare with 2009 baseline data.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The age of digital literacy is here. Our 21st Century students are learning and growing in a school environment that requires continual assessment and improvement. An integral part of this process is providing teachers with the professional development that will facilitate teacher learning, best practice application, and desired student outcomes.

The district has begun the process of professional development in the Project Approach for administrators, teachers, and staff with our national consultant, Sylvia Chard ([www.projectapproach.com](http://www.projectapproach.com)). She has provided training throughout the 2008-2009 school year and five days of summer training in June-July 2009.

This grant will allow us to launch a new set of training opportunities targeting the use of laptops for Project work in the elementary setting. These training components will complement current training by specifically targeting how to manage, document, collaborate on, and publish digital content. The training for elementary teachers will begin in the Summer of 2010, and will continue throughout the 2010-2011 school year. We will host a shared Project Based learning workshop for teachers in MSDLT and Center Grove. We will also introduce BigUniverse and the DOE Learning Connection site in our training. We will continue this support in an online learning environment for the participants in this project by providing them a space to collaborate, share, and post questions. Technology coaches will be onsite to support teachers in the classroom as they rollout new project ideas. The partner school will also be available to collaborate and share ideas through the DOE Learning Connection.

## **FORMATIVE/SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

Our Project Coaches will monitor all activities associated with this grant to ensure that timelines for implementation, sustainable professional growth, and student achievement goals are evaluated.

On the technical side, laptop logs will monitor the extent of COW usage.

Harrison Hill School of Inquiry has been using the Project Approach for several years and has consistently improved in ISTEP, Acuity, and other summative assessment scores. We believe that using this same approach at all sites will improve their scores and achievement as well. Each school involved

in this project will begin with a baseline of summative assessment ISTEP and Acuity scores prior to implementation of the Project Approach and will be monitoring for expected changes regularly. Both Lawrence Township and Center Grove Community School Corporation utilize the product ¿Datamine¿ ¿ the district adopted datawarehouse. We will be able to setup special subgroups in our datawarehouse to analyze a full range of data points. Teachers can also login to the PEP version of the product to analyze results at a classroom level. The school districts can collaborate together on data analysis since they share this common product.

Project Coaches will keep a tally of the number of Projects presented and published and a log of the instances of collaboration between schools and teachers in MSDLT and Center Grove.

In addition, the following tools will be used to monitor student growth:

- ¿ ISTEP and Acuity test scores,
- ¿ Student Writing Samples,
- ¿ Student reflections of work/Projects recorded in eportfolios,
- ¿ Data Collected through the DOE Learning Connection

## **LOCAL MATCH**

\$98,000

Center Grove Community School Corporation is committed to install wireless access points in the designated areas of the 4th and 5th grade classrooms at all six elementary schools to support the streamlined use of the minilaptop computers in the classrooms. The estimate cost of this enhancement will be \$20,000 for the six elementary buildings. In addition the school district will purchase additional ¿Technology Project Carts¿ to ensure that there is one cart designated per grade level in 4th and 5th grades for a cost of \$78,000. The district¿s total local fund contribution to this project will be \$98,000.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Lawrence Township Schools will partner for this project with the Center Grove Community School Corporation's Technology Department. Barb Raymond, technology staff developer, has played an extensive role in developing a ¿Project-Based Learning¿ curriculum for the elementary schools. She recently coordinated a select group of teachers from each grade-level to write technology integrated projects. The rationale for creating these projects was to ensure that students have experience using a variety of digital tools while correlating with technology literacy standards. In addition to the designated grade-level projects the elementary schools are highly committed to student constructed projects. Our classrooms utilize Pixie 3.0 for student-created eBooks. BigUniversity.com provides a library of electronic books. Students can also create personalized digital ebooks on the Big Universe to add to the library. They become published authors! Students can share the books they are reading on Big Universe

on their own virtual bookshelf. They can swap book recommendations with friends and share stories they create. This site could be an avenue to connect Lawrence Township students with Center Grove students. Another project software that the district has recently adopted is ¿Comic Life¿. This program expands what students can do with your digital photos. Comic Life lets you create astounding comics, beautiful picture albums , and children's story books.

Our current technology challenge is due to the statewide Acuity project grant. We are now faced with conducting this special online assessment four times a year. In order to meet this requirement, our computer labs and full-size laptop carts are completely utilized for this testing. This has created a major roadblock for the success of our project-based learning activities. This grant funding will allow Center Grove to designate ¿technology project carts¿ complete with 30 mini-laptops, a mini-laptop cart, ten flip video cams, and ten usb microphones for use in the 4th and 5th grade classrooms. Within the budget provided by this grant, we will equip six ¿project carts¿ to each of our elementary schools designated for 5th grade classrooms. In addition, the school district will commit to purchasing six ¿project carts¿ that will be designated for the 4th grade classrooms.

The Technology Director from Lawrence Township, David Hunnicutt, and the Technology Director from Center Grove, Julie Bohnenkamp, will collaborate on this project and plan experiences for all participating teachers. These experiences will take place ¿onsite¿ as well as online via the Learning Connection. These two directors have a long-term collaboration and have proven to easily work well together.

Center Grove is eager to capitalize on the ¿lessons learned¿ from these past 1:1 technology projects. The district has been very successful with the second grade laptop project and feels very confident that the upper elementary grades will equally benefit. The teachers from the laptop project can share experience on lessons learned for the management of technology within their classroom. As a project partner with Lawrence Township, we are willing to share both our newly written technology curriculum for our Computer Lab Rotation, the special ¿Technology Projects¿ curriculum designated for each grade level K-5, and the newly written Internet Safety Curriculum. We will use the new Learning Connection portal to discuss, collaborate, and share these projects with the participating teachers from Lawrence Township. In addition, the Learning Connection will be our portal for delivering classroom content for our students in grades 4-5. Students will be able to submit their final project within their online classroom in the Learning Connection. This alignment in our ¿next steps¿ fits closely with Lawrence Township's project.